

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLJ #0346 1530548
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 020548Z JUN 06
FM AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4882
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LJUBLJANA 000346

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NCE - TRIM AND PM/RSAT - DOWLEY
OSD FOR SADOWSKA
JOINT STAFF FOR MANTIPLY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/02/2016
TAGS: [MARR](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [SI](#)
SUBJECT: SLOVENIA: LTG ALBIN GUTMAN NAMED NEW CHOD

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Maryruth Coleman for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (U) On June 1, Minister of Defense Karl Erjavec named Lieutenant General Albin Gutman as the new Chief of Defense, to replace Major General Ladislav Lipic. The appointment officially became effective on June 2.

¶2. (U) Gutman,s military career began in Slovenia,s Territorial Defense Force, where he played an active role in Slovenia,s 10-day war of independence in 1991. In 1993, then Defense Minister Janez Jansa nominated Gutman to be CHOD, a position that he held until 1998. From 1998) 2003, Gutman served as the Inspector General in the MOD. Since 2003, he has served as an advisor to the Minister of Defense.

¶3. (U) The print daily &Delo8 speculated that Gutman,s appointment represents a victory of the &independence camp8 (i.e. those who actively participated in the Territorial Defense Forces during Slovenia,s war of independence) over the &former Yugoslav Army officers camp.8 Numerous media have also opined that Gutman was chosen because of his close ties to Prime Minister Jansa.

¶4. (C) EMBASSY COMMENT: Gutman is an experienced and professional soldier with an excellent reputation in military circles. He clearly enjoys the confidence of both PM Jansa and MOD Erjavec and is not a controversial appointment. Although the circumstances surrounding Lipic's decision to step down are not entirely clear, there is little doubt that the decision was made at the behest of MOD Erjavec. Numerous media reported that Lipic,s relations with Erjavec had been strained in recent months. According to the print daily "Dnevnik," Erjavec felt that Lipic,s plans for the professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) had been too slow and was disappointed with Lipic,s level of support for the MOD,s public relations campaign in support of Slovenia,s deployment of instructors to the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I). We expect LTG Gutman to be a strong supporter of NATO and of continued military transformation within the SAF. END COMMENT.
COLEMAN